



# Cancer Survivorship



*An increasing number of people are surviving cancer. As the population of cancer survivors grows, the public health community is considering ways to address the issues related to survivorship. Survivorship is a broad term that refers not only to people who have been diagnosed with cancer at some point in their lives, but also to the friends and family members of people who have been diagnosed with cancer.*

*CDC is working with national, state, and local partners to create and implement successful strategies to help the millions of people in the United States who live with, through, and beyond cancer.*

## Cancer and Survivorship

Because of advances in the early detection and treatment of cancer, people are living many years after a diagnosis. As of January 2002, there were approximately 10.1 million cancer survivors in the United States (1). Today, approximately 65% of people diagnosed with cancer are expected to live at least 5 years after diagnosis (1).

During diagnosis, treatment, and post-treatment, cancer survivors face physical, emotional, social, spiritual, and financial issues—issues that are of concern to public health professionals.

For example, because of genetic predispositions, common lifestyle factors, and the effects of cancer treatments, cancer survivors are at increased risk for certain health problems after diagnosis and treatment (2). In light of these concerns, public health initiatives that strive to understand and prevent secondary disease and recurrence, and to improve survivors' quality of life, are essential.

## Risk Factors

- Age is a primary risk factor for most cancers. In fact, approximately 56.5% of all cancers are diagnosed among people aged 65 years or older (3).
- Smoking is a preventable risk factor for cancer recurrence and second cancers. Smoking also contributes to primary cancers (4).
- Obesity may be related to poorer survival for women diagnosed with breast cancer (6, 8, 9) and to a poor prognosis following a prostate cancer diagnosis (5, 7).
- Low-income men and women who have inadequate or no health insurance coverage are more likely to be diagnosed with cancer at later stages, when survival times are shorter (10).

## Screening

Cancer survivors are at greater risk for recurrence and for developing second cancers because of the effects of treatment, continued lifestyle behaviors, underlying genetics, or risk factors that contributed to the first cancer. Although screening guidelines are not available

for all cancers, survivors should discuss with their doctors at the end of treatment the appropriate schedule for screening, as well as the types of screening needed. Survivors also should decide who will be responsible for monitoring this screening schedule long-term.

## Accomplishments

In 2004, CDC and the Lance Armstrong Foundation (LAF), along with nearly 100 experts in cancer survivorship and public health, released *A National Action Plan for Cancer Survivorship: Advancing Public Health Strategies* (Action Plan), available at [www.cdc.gov/cancer/survivorship/what\\_cdc\\_is\\_doing/action\\_plan.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/cancer/survivorship/what_cdc_is_doing/action_plan.htm). This collaboration blended goals, activities, and resources to address the issues facing the growing number of American cancer survivors.

CDC has joined forces with many national organizations, states, tribes, and territories to address several of the cancer survivorship “priority needs” cited in the Action Plan. This work includes efforts to increase survivorship in underserved populations, and initiatives to improve end-of-life support for cancer patients, their family, their friends, and their caregivers. For example,

- Since 2004, the Patient Advocate Foundation has worked with cancer patients to ensure their finances, employment, and medical treatments are not interrupted by poor or slow insurance reimbursement, or employment status.

- CDC is supporting the Public Broadcasting Service film *A Lion in the House* with an initiative to raise awareness about the challenges facing young-adult survivors of cancer.
- The Comprehensive Cancer Control Leadership Institutes (CCCLIs) are 2-day seminars designed to help cancer control leaders complete and implement Comprehensive Cancer Control plans in states, tribes/tribal organizations, and territories. Planning is under way for Phase 3 of the CCCLIs, which will address issues related to survivorship and palliative care.

These and other public health efforts that address cancer survivorship support CDC’s overarching goal of healthy people in every stage of life. They also address the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ Healthy People 2010 goal of increasing to 70% the proportion of cancer survivors who live 5 years or longer after diagnosis.

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## Ongoing Work

CDC’s cancer survivorship activities for fiscal year 2006 include

- Working toward a better understanding of end-of-life (EOL) issues, as these issues relate to cancer and chronic diseases. CDC’s EOL team, which includes the Division of Cancer Prevention and Control and the Division of Adult and Community Health, is reviewing all states’ and territories’ Comprehensive Cancer Control plans to determine what work is being done to address EOL issues, and to identify ways that CDC can assist states, territories, and tribes with incorporating EOL initiatives into their plans.
- Studying various aspects of survivorship to
  - Determine quality of life related to men’s choice in prostate cancer treatment.
  - Characterize the specialty of physicians who provide care to older cancer survivors.
  - Better understand what information cancer survivors need.
- Joining forces with LAF to support the continuation of the National Cancer Survivorship Resource Center, which addresses the needs of cancer survivors, their family members, their friends, and their caregivers. The Center helps survivors understand and address the physical, emotional, and practical issues that may arise after a cancer diagnosis.

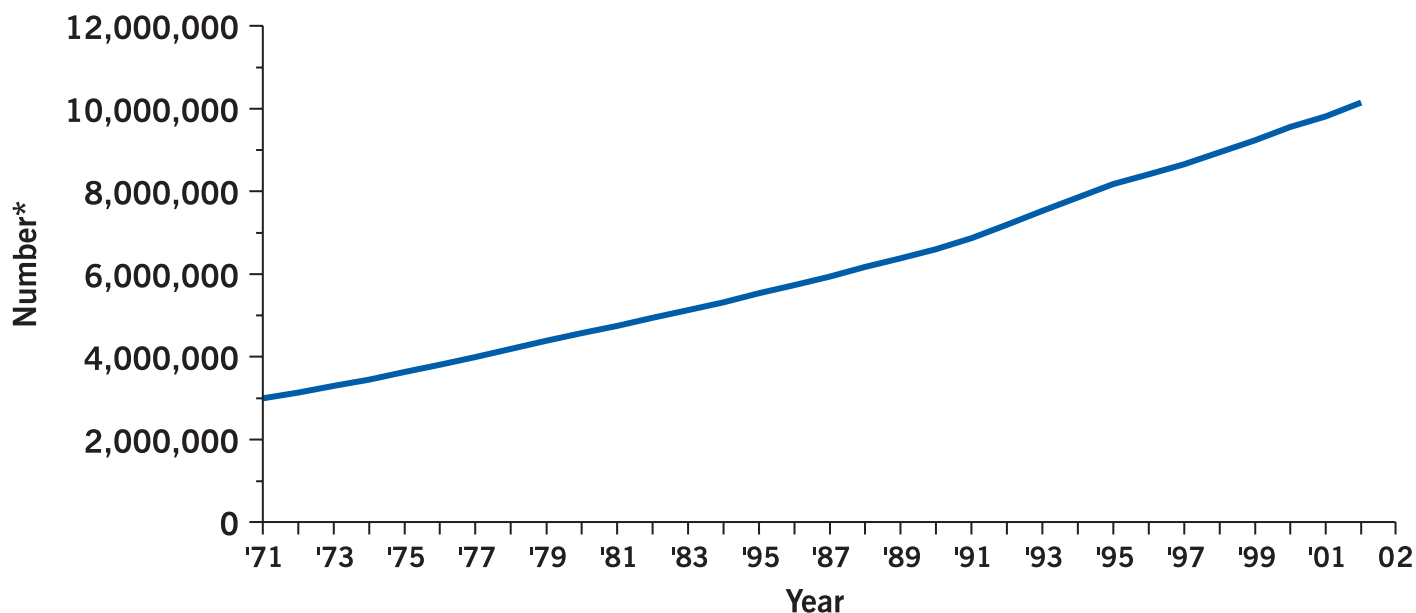
## Future Directions

Although many public health initiatives address the early detection, prevention, and control of cancer, public health is relatively new to the cancer survivorship arena. For this reason, CDC is conducting a national needs-assessment study, exploring current public health activities related to

cancer survivorship, both inside and outside CDC. The assessment will identify gaps in public health functions and services related to cancer survivorship, and findings will guide national strategic planning regarding survivorship.

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### Estimated Number of Cancer Survivors in the United States, from 1971 to 2002



\*U.S. 2002 cancer prevalence counts are based on 2002 cancer prevalence proportions from the SEER 9 registries and 1/1/2002 U.S. population estimates based on the average of 2001 and 2002 population estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau.

Source: Ries LAG, Eisner MP, Kosary CL, Hankey BF, Miller BA, Clegg L, et al. (eds). *SEER Cancer Statistics Review, 1975-2002*. Bethesda, MD: National Cancer Institute; 2005. Available at [http://seer.cancer.gov/csr/1975\\_2002/](http://seer.cancer.gov/csr/1975_2002/).

# Contact Information

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